



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen, Assistant City Manager Evan Vass

FROM: Thanh H. Dang, Public Works Planner

DATE: May 21, 2009

RE: Transportation Safety Commission Minutes for May 7, 2009

The Transportation Safety Commission met on Thursday May 7, 2009, 9AM, at the Department of Public Transportation, 475 E Washington St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (chairman), Calvin Ferrell (citizen), Len Van Wyk (citizen), Ben Wyse (citizen), Lee Eschelman (JMU), Officer Greg Deeds (Police), Sgt. Bill Keller (Police), Thanh Dang (Public Works), Aaron Smith-Walter (Public Transportation), Reggie Smith (Public Transportation)

Guests present: Brad Reed (Public Works), Shawn Adams (Public Works), Miriam Dickler (City Manager's Office), Mary-Hope Gangwer (Police)

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

1. Special Presentation: "Team Up to Slow Down" Neighborhood Speed Education Campaign

Ms. Dickler presented a new campaign, currently under development, called "Team Up to Slow Down" that she, Ms. Gangwer, and Ms. Dang have been working on. Campaign development started in response to the number of streets and neighborhoods that were experiencing problems with speeding. Team Up to Slow Down will be "a neighborhood-specific campaign to be partnered with or used

separately from the City of Harrisonburg's existing traffic calming programs" (NTCP and Neighborhood Speed Watch Program) and will involve Harrisonburg Police, Public Works, and citizens. Ms. Dickler shared how the program would include neighborhood meetings, pledges, printed materials, yard signage & bumper stickers, etc. *See attached powerpoint slides for more details.*

Mr. Van Wyk thinks this program is good and suggested that the Commission and city staff rethink how the NTCP works with this program. Mr. Blessing stated he would like to see this campaign be utilized in the broader community and not just in neighborhoods. A discussion was had about how use in neighborhoods would impact the broader community. It is also important for neighborhoods to initiate involvement and "buy in".

Materials for the campaign are currently being development and additional questions and comments are welcomed. Please contact Ms. Dickler, Ms. Gangwer, or Ms. Dang.

2. Special Presentation: Public Transportation Department –"Bus Routing Part II"

Mr. Smith-Walter presented information on Harrisonburg's Bus/Transit Routes. *Please see attached powerpoint slides for more details.*

Mr. Van Wyk asked how feedback from the community is received which prompted a discussion on how Public Transit should increase frequency of buses traveling along a route and to better serve a larger area/population. Mr. Smith-Walter noted that 92-95% of bus ridership are related to JMU (students, faculty, staff) resulting in much of the focus of bus routing around JMU.

Old Business

3. Peach Grove Ave

School flashing lights have been installed by city forces and are operating.

4. Vine St, Country Club Rd, E Market St Intersection

Mr. Reed presented a proposal to improve coordination, capacity, and flow through the Vine St, Country Club Rd, and E Market St intersections. *See attached.*

Mr. Van Wyk asked how motorist traveling in the southbound lanes on Vine St to cross on the Hawkins St would know in advance of Country Club Rd which lane they needed to be in. Mr. Reed & Mr. Adams noted that they will explore solutions.

Mr. Blessing stated his concern regarding the left turn onto Vine St at the northern most entrance of Sheetz.

There was Commission support for the proposed improvements.

5. Reservoir & Neff Avenue, Pedestrian Safety

Mike Dellinger, city staff, had witnessed a pedestrian almost get struck by a motor vehicle at the intersection of Reservoir & Neff Avenues. The person was heading west across the intersection on Reservoir, where the cones are in the turn lane, and a vehicle was heading east on Reservoir turning south onto Neff Avenue. The motorist looked to see if traffic was coming southbound and did not see the pedestrian and almost hit them.

Commission members noted the heavy pedestrian traffic in the area, and visibly worn foot paths, along the Reservoir St corridor, which has increased since the opening of Copper Beech Apartments. Mr. Smith noted a lot of JMU students walking along the corridor on weekend nights.

Recognizing that the city is currently working on improvement designs to the Reservoir St corridor, which will include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the Commission noted their continued support for the Reservoir St project to improve pedestrian safety, noting that crosswalks and pedestrian signals should be installed.

6. Vine St, Trucks

The Commission reviewed a letter from Rev. Eugene Buie at 790 Vine St and response letter from City Manager Kurt Hodgen. Rev. Buie “protest[ed] the continued use of Vine Street by heavy trucks” and said that trucks made it “hazardous to back out or pull in” his driveway.

Ms. Dang noted that Vine St/ Mt Clinton Pike were built with the intent of City Council as a truck route. The Commission reviewed photos of Vine St and the driveway and noted that cutting back the bushes around the driveway would improve sight distance considerably.

Mr. Blessing will mail a letter to Rev Buie suggesting that the bushes be cut back. *See attached letter.*

7. Sheetz, S Main St

Officer Deeds informed the Commission that this issue has been resolved.

8. Evelyn Byrd & Parking Lot Entrance

An issue was brought to the attention of Public Works by Elina Apostolatova, 337 Shenandale Drive McGayheysville, regarding an entrance to Forbes Crossing on Evelyn Byrd Avenue. She noted a motor vehicle accident that had occurred at this location in April and stated she believe the trees on Evelyn Byrd obstruct the view of drivers existing the shopping center.

The Commission reviewed the intersection, pictures, and the April accident report and noted that the accident is unrelated to the trees obstructing sight distance. However, the Commission noted that the trees do reduce sight distance and asked Public Works to follow up on this issue and have the trees

limbed up. Public Works will give the property owner the opportunity to limb up the tree before city forces go in to do the work.

9. Access to Crime & Traffic Collision Reporting, www.crimereports.com

Ms. Dang shared with the Commission the new website www.crimereports.com.

10. Neighborhood Speeding – Fairway Hills

The Fairway Hills neighborhood has expressed interest in the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming. Mr. David Balmer, 434 Fairway Dr, and his neighbors are concerned about speeding vehicles and cut through traffic. Ms. Dang had suggested that Mr. Balmer and his neighbors sign up first for the Neighborhood Speed Watch Program, in which the Police Department provides citizens with radar to track speeding vehicles. Vehicles found speeding will be sent a letter of warning from the Police Department. Officer Deeds will be assisting Mr. Balmer with this program.

11. Neighborhood Speeding – Franklin St

Mr. Blessing had received comments from neighbors on Franklin St who want a 4-way stop sign at the intersection of Franklin & Ott Streets. Ms. Dang noted that Public Works have also been approached by neighbors for a 4-way stop. At this time, stop signs at this intersection are not warranted. Accident data was reviewed by the Commission and within the last 3 years there have been three accidents reported at this intersection, two of which resulted from drivers traveling on Ott St not obeying the stop sign. The third accident occurred on the 200 block of Franklin St (not at the intersection) and resulted in a mirror being knocked off by a passing vehicle.

The Commission agreed that Mr. Blessing and Ms. Dang should contact the neighbors and suggest that they participate in the Neighborhood Speed Watch Program.

Mr. Blessing also received comments from neighbors regarding the double yellow line on Franklin St approaching Meyers Ave. Neighbors do not believe that the yellow line is located correctly. Commission members discussed that the appearance that yellow line is not located correctly may be an optical illusion due to the road design and that at 25 mph speeds, there is not safety issue present.

Other Business/Announcements

Future special presentations may include (a) an update on Traffic Signal Coordination, (b) Opticom system, (c) Mr. Eschelman's survey of JMU student's travel patterns.

Ms. Dang announced that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee's first meeting will be May 18th and also that S Main St at the railroad tracks near Rocco Drive will be closed to through traffic from May 17-20 for bicycle safety improvements.

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, 4, 2009, 9AM, at the Department of Planning & Community Development,
409 S Main Street.**

Adjourned



team
up to slow
down

Why?

Traffic Complaints

2005 - 2,060

2006 - 1,837

2007 - 1,700

2008 - 1,694

Traffic Crashes

2005 - 2,102

2006 - 1,854

2007 - 1,901

2008 - 2,146

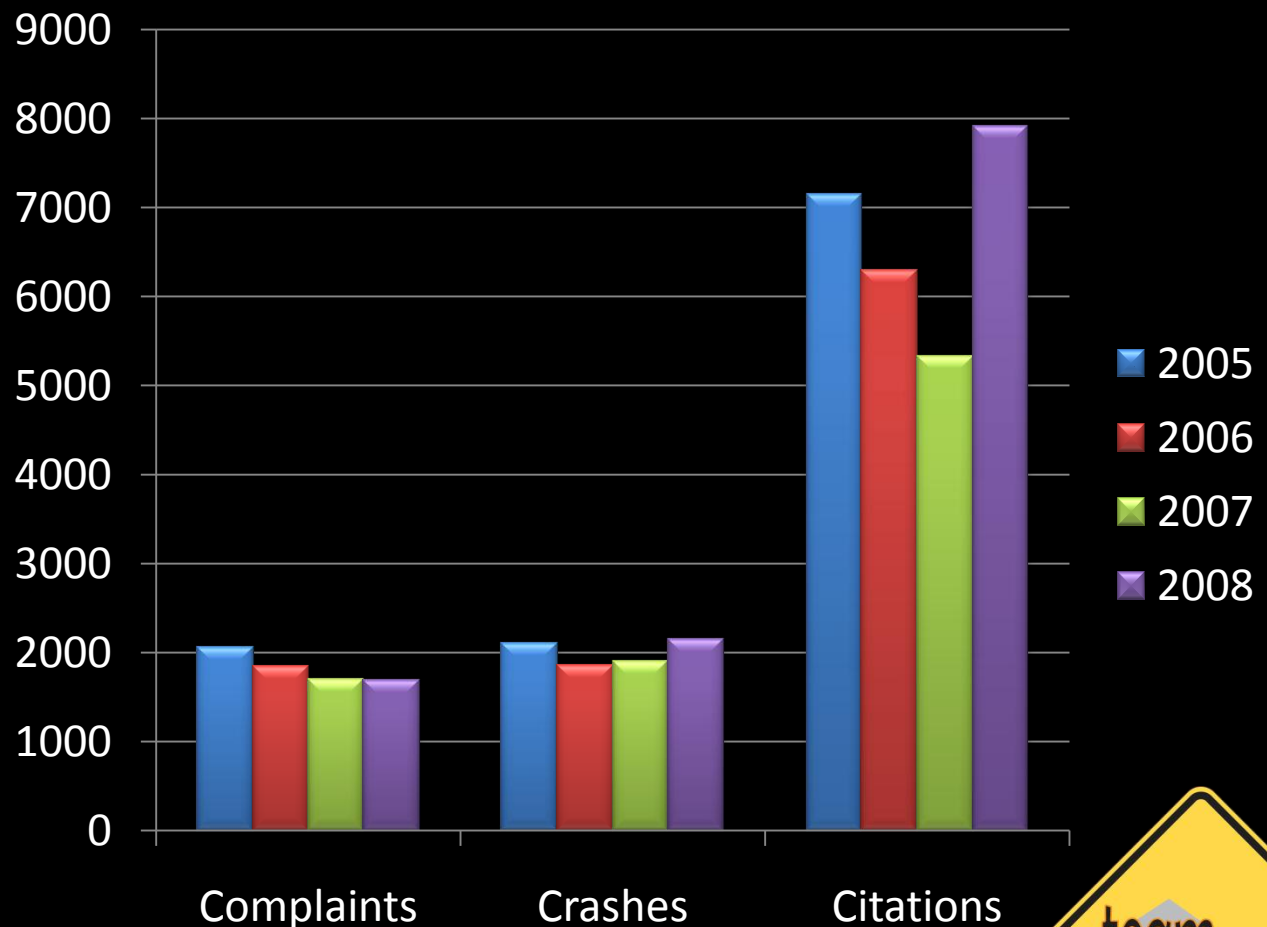
Traffic Citations

2005 - 7,144

2006 - 6,295

2007 - 5,326

2008 - 7,914



Citizens

HPD

Public
Works



A neighborhood-specific campaign to be partnered with or used separately from the City of Harrisonburg's existing traffic calming programs.



- ◆ Encourage “buy-in.”
- ◆ Enable participation.
- ◆ Energize positive community experience.
- ◆ End isolation.
- ◆ Engage individuals.
- ◆ Engender responsibility.
- ◆ Engrain improved driving habits.









Multi-Phase Targeted Program

- ◆ Neighborhood Meetings (investment)
- ◆ Resident Pledges (citizen commitment)
- ◆ City Presentations/Studies (information)
- ◆ Reproducible Printed Materials (education)
- ◆ Yard Signage & Bumper Stickers (responsibility)
- ◆ Ongoing City Participation (city commitment)
- ◆ Responsive AND Proactive.



If neighbors commit to responsible driving, others will be less able to drive irresponsibly in their neighborhood.



-  Pledge Cards
-  Community Meetings
-  Neighbor Involvement
-  Teen Education
-  Traffic Calming
-  Speed Monitoring



Take the Pledge

I commit to help stop speeding and reckless driving in the City of Harrisonburg and my neighborhood by agreeing to follow the guidelines below.

I will obey posted speed limits.

I will wear seatbelts and require all others in my vehicle to do the same.

I will follow other cars at a safe and respectful distance.

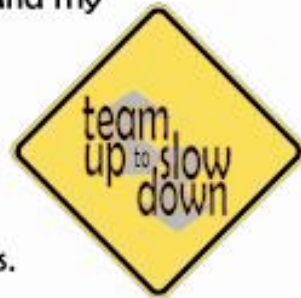
I will watch the road and the surrounding areas for possibly dangerous situations.

I will minimize distractions in my car including cell phones, music and eating.

I will help my community understand that our commitment can save lives and make our city safer.

Print name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: __/__/__



The bearer of this card is committed to help stop speeding and reckless driving in the City of Harrisonburg by being a part of Team Up to Slow Down.

For more information visit
www.teamupslowdown.org





What's Your Hurry?



Slow Your Roll.



Haste Makes Waste.



Take it Easy.



Slower is Steadier.



What's
Your
Hurry?





What's
Your
Hum?
What's
Your
Hurry?

What's
Your
Hurry?

Questions?



HDPT Bus Routing

An Overview

HDPT Transit Quick Facts¹

- Annual Passenger Miles: 3,391,838
 - Fixed-Route: 3,319,811
 - Demand Response: 72,027
- Unlinked Passenger Trips: 1,492,318
 - Fixed-Route: 1,468,943
 - Demand Response: 23,375

¹ 2007 National Transit Database Reporting Data www.ntdprogram.gov

Current Fleet Size

■ Buses

- (>35 feet): 25
- (<35 feet): 12

■ Operating Expense:

- Fixed-Route: \$2,123,947
- Demand Response: \$468,800

■ Fare Revenue:

- Fixed-Route: \$1,030,655
- Demand Response: \$39,133

The Two Types of Routing

■ Route Revision:

- Existing routes are modified
- Driver, passenger, and citizen comments are impetus for change in route
- New developments can create changes

■ Route Creation:

- New development necessitates the deployment of a new route

Route Revision

- 2 Major Route Examinations:
 - Summer Changes: For JMU Fall Semester
 - Winter Changes: For JMU Spring Semester
- 2 Minor Adjustment Periods:
 - Late August/Early September
 - Mid-January

Example: Memorial Hall

- Lease/Purchase of Harrisonburg High School by JMU lead to a significant change in trip demand.
- Administrators at JMU contacted HDPT to see if provision of transit service along class times was possible at new building.
- HDPT made the following alterations to Inner Campus Shuttles I & II.

Alterations:

- Removed Inner Campus Shuttle I from Blue Ridge Hall and Miller.
- Extended service to Memorial Hall.
- Instituted turn-a-round at Festival on Carrier Drive.

Existing Process:

- Investigate class time constraints.
- Develop travel time model.
- Establish time anchor points.
- Build-in recovery time.
- Institute service.
- Receive feedback.
- Make revisions, if necessary.

Investigate class time constraints.

M/W/F	Class Time	T/TH	Class Time
8:00 a.m.	50 min.	8:00 a.m.	75 min.
9:05 a.m.	50 min.	9:30 a.m.	75 min.
10:10 a.m.	50 min.	11:00 a.m.	75 min.
11:15 a.m.	50 min.	12:30 p.m.	75 min.
12:20 p.m.	50 min.	2:00 p.m.	75 min.
1:25 p.m.	50 min.	3:30 p.m.	75 min.
2:30 p.m.	50 min.	5:00 p.m.	75 min.
3:35 p.m.	50 min.	Travel Time b/t classes = 15 minutes.	
4:40 p.m.	50 min.		

Trip from Festival (Shelter) to Memorial Hall:

- 13 Minutes Long
- 2.12 Miles
- 6 Intersections regulated by Traffic Lights



Develop travel time model.

- A minimum of six test runs are made.
 - Morning X2
 - Midday X2
 - Afternoon X2
- These times are averaged to build the initial schedule.

Establish time anchor points.

- Combine time constraints (15 minute class break) with data generated from travel time model.
 - Leaving Festival (Shelter) at 8:51 a.m. means students have 3 minutes to get out of class and to the bus stop at ISAT to arrive at Memorial 1 minute before class begins.

Build-in recovery time.

- Recovery time is an important concept in transit as traffic is fundamentally unpredictable.
- The time allows the route to deal with traffic lights, higher than average boardings/alightings, traffic accidents, etc.
- For example 13 minutes every 52 minutes to are allowed for ICS 1 to recover M/W/F.

Institute service.

- Once the schedule is developed, driver input is solicited.
- Barring any blocking concerns, service is scheduled and implemented.

Receive feedback.

- The first two weeks of any new schedule are busy with route revisions.
- Each semester is different, since class loads shift and the JMU environment is extremely fluid.
- Drivers, passengers, and citizen comments play a role in assessing route performance.

Make revisions, if necessary.

- If a sufficient number of suggestions, comments, and complaints are registered, an investigation of route performance is undertaken.
- This involves riding the route to monitor on-time performance, time-checks at vital stops, etc.
- If warranted, route schedule is revised.

Future Route Creation

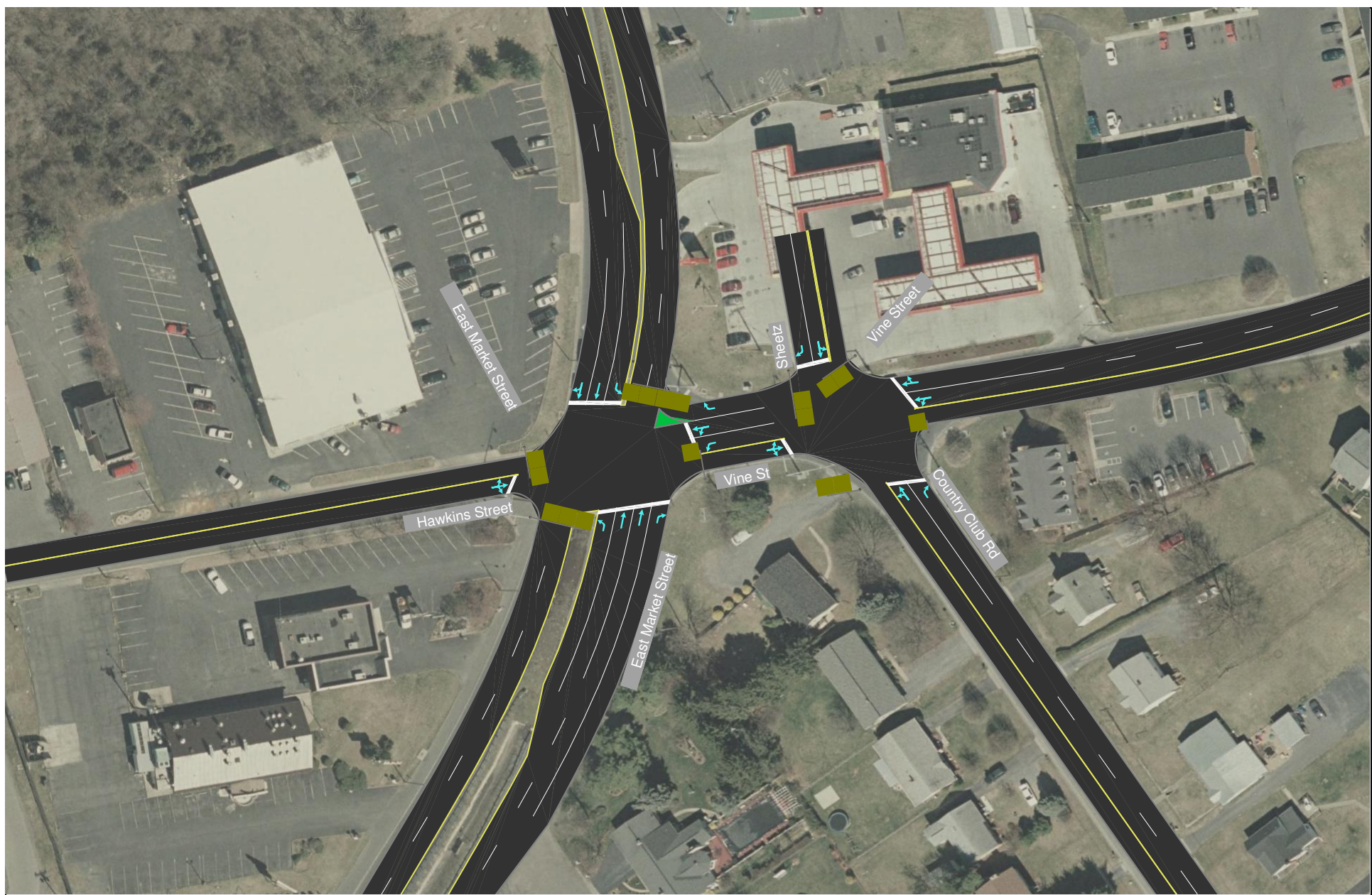
- HDPT is currently in the process of implementing two new GPS-based systems that will stream-line the route development process.
- On-board schedule adherence
- Automatic Passenger Counters

On-Board Schedule Adherence

- On board computer will monitor scheduled time and actual time.
- Will notify the driver when a route is operating more than 5 minutes late.
- Will keep a detailed log for reporting to routing staff.
- Staff can analyze trends in hourly performance to make schedules more accurate.

Automatic Passenger Counters

- Uses infrared beams and geospatial coding to log the number of passengers boarding/alighting at a particular stop.
- This will allow HDPT to be more effective in run cutting, stop placement and elimination in the future.



HARRISONBURG TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

May 14, 2009

Rev. Dr. Eugene C. Buie, Jr.
790 Vine Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Dear Rev. Buie:

Our Safety Commission exists to review and evaluate transportation safety issues in Harrisonburg and its immediate surroundings. When we believe there is an opportunity to resolve a safety concern in a positive way, we will make a recommendation to appropriate persons.

We have reviewed your letter and discussed your concerns at our last meeting. One of those concerns, loud trucks, is really not a safety issue and does not fall within the scope of our work. We have looked at the traffic volumes on Vine Street. A count taken several months ago showed less than 10 percent of the volume over a seven day period were trucks and most of those were not large trucks. As City Manager Hodgen pointed out to you, Vine Street was built to move truck traffic and even the relatively low percentage of trucks are allowed to use Vine Street and that, too, is not a safety issue, as long as all traffic, including trucks, operate safely. At this point, we have no evidence that that is not the case. We will continue to periodically look at this street, as we do with all streets in the city, to determine if safety issues have arisen.

We do agree with you that there is a sight distance problem at the curve where you live. Unfortunately, the problem is created by the bushes growing near the curb on the inside of the curve. We believe the sight distance can be improved considerably by cutting the bushes back. We cannot require that this be done, but we do recommend that you cut yours back and ask your neighbor to do the same in the interest of general public safety, as well as that of you and your neighbor. Should you agree to do this, we will then want to review with you how that may have helped (or not).



William E. Blessing, Chairman

cc: Kurt Hodgen, City Manager
James Baker, Public Works
Capt. Claytor, HPD